



COMMUNITY SERVICES GROUP

Volume 4 Number 21

Fast, Focused and Friendly Service

December 2002

Holiday Spirit Abounds at CSG

CSG departments have caught the holiday spirit. Employees have enthusiastically given of their time and money to make the holidays happier for others less fortunate than themselves.

HCD has filled three barrels with Salvation Army food donations and chosen ten organizations to support during the holiday season. Examples include the Boys & Girls Club Holiday Luncheons, Ronald McDonald House Holiday Celebration, Baykeeper Beach Cleanups and Alvarado Hospital holiday events. HCD also "adopted" Eldercare of San Diego and donated over \$500 in grocery store gift certificates. P&C is conducting a holiday food drive. The Library, DAC and ROV are supporting students at the Monarch School with a holiday drive and have collected more than \$1,500 in cash and gift certificates. ROV has also purchased \$500 worth of the students' homemade bracelets and necklaces from their Butterfly Enterprises marketing project and ROV managers collected \$900 for the purchase of an electronic keyboard and bongos. The Monarch School is an innovative project that provides a stable and safe environment for homeless youth to earn their high school diplomas.

DGS has been collecting baby items for the "Take Wing" program run by San Diego Youth & Community Services, an organization that provides services to homeless, abused and runaway youth.

Congratulations to CSG departments for their generosity and compassion during this special time of year.



New Look for Newsletter

As you may have noticed, the CSG newsletter has a different nameplate. Not only has the color scheme changed, but CSG has a new logo. The logo was created to provide the group with a "brand" in the form of a dynamic graphic design. Larry Mesmer, Project Manager in the CSG executive office, served as the graphic artist and spent many late hours working on multiple iterations and variations in the design. Finally a favorite was chosen and unveiled at the Quarterly Report to the CAO. The new logo will be seen as signage on the door at the CAC and printed on CSG business reports, correspondence and presentations and used on miscellaneous office supplies.

From
Alex's
D E S K



This time of year inspires us to count our blessings, which, rightfully, includes family, friends and colleagues. Personally, I am also grateful for all the hard work and accomplishments this past year by staff in the Community Services Group. Thank you for all your contributions, support, and service to the people of San Diego.

Reflecting on the past year there are several CSG successes that we should take time to celebrate. At the San Pasqual Academy, construction of the new football field and the gymnasium remodel managed by General Services are a source of pride for all. These new amenities will significantly help our foster youth for years to come. The grand opening of new libraries in Rancho San Diego and Valley Center are legacy projects that will clearly enhance the quality of life for our citizens. Successfully conducting the 2002 general election and selecting an electronic voting system, significantly increasing the adoption rate while lowering the euthanasia rate of adoptable animals, providing an increased number of housing vouchers, and implementing just-in-time purchasing practices are successes that speak to your commitment, talent and teamwork. Please take the time to acknowledge and feel good about these accomplishments.

Let us begin 2003 with a renewed sense of purpose to provide fast, focused and friendly service to the public. Again, thank you for your efforts and my warmest wishes for a safe and happy holiday season to you and your families.

ALEX A. MARTINEZ
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Community Services Group



Animal Control

Sometimes Animal Control Officers respond to calls where the animals involved do not run, jump, wag, fly, meow, purr or bark. On October 30, when officers from the San Diego Police Department contacted DAC for assistance, they had quite a dilemma on their hands – what to do with three Burmese Pythons found in the trunk of a car!

Since the owner of the snakes had been evicted from his home with no place to go, Animal Control Officers took the snakes into protective custody, which was no easy task. One of the snakes measured fifteen feet in length and weighed almost 200 pounds! The other two were much smaller.

Handling the snakes has been quite a challenge for DAC staff. Although the snakes are heavy and ferocious in appearance, they are actually very delicate and the slightest wrong move can injure them. Conversely, injury to the snakes is not the only risk. Reptiles this large can be extremely dangerous to handle; staff took extra precautions when moving or handling them.



Dave Johnson, Lori Hite, Raymond Gray, Ken Winter, Jennifer Gonzales, Jennifer Chavez & Brutus.

As it happened, the owner was unable to find a suitable place to live where the snakes would be safely housed and decided it was in their best interest to relinquish them to the department. DAC then faced the dilemma – what to do with three Burmese Pythons?

After numerous phone calls, the Los Angeles Zoo agreed to take the snakes. They will remain temporarily at the Kroc Copley shelter until “Slither Mission,” (a Los Angeles reptile rescue) picks them up and transports them to the zoo.

Having the quiet, mysterious, creatures at the central shelter has been intriguing for staff. As far as anyone can remember, the 200 pound snake is the largest the department has ever encountered.

General Services

There’s a good reason to look out for the best interests of the County and pay attention to details as we go about our jobs. Patricia Zeitounian, who works as an analyst for the department, was convinced that something was wrong when the electric bill for a



County building went up 56 percent in spite of major energy conservation efforts. Her persistence in getting to the bottom of this problem ultimately led to an \$838,000 refund to the County from SDG&E due to overbilling.

On December 11, Patricia was honored for her diligence and presented with a check for \$20,000 under the County’s Do It Better By Suggestions or DIBBS program. The program is intended to encourage employees to offer their suggestions for saving money, improving productivity or workplace safety. Awards can range from a minimum of \$50 to a maximum of \$20,000 and the suggestions must be outside the scope of the employee’s regular duties. Congratulations to Patricia for taking the extra steps that contribute to excellence in County service.

Housing and Community Development

Housing and Community Development (HCD) recently contracted with Signature, Incorporated to provide Customer Service assessment and training. The initial training for employees included two days and covered e-mail and voice mail etiquette and teaching customer skills to every employee in the department. Additional training takes place quarterly. HCD now has their own “mystery shopper” using Signature employees who make calls to HCD on a weekly basis to assess the greetings of staff personally or on voice mail and also assess how staff responds to questions that are department specific. All staff are able to listen to their calls and identify ways to improve, if necessary. The training is paying off as HCD has already seen an improvement in customer service ratings over last year’s scores.



Library

Keeping young people coming to the library once they reach their teens is a challenge. Preschoolers love going with their parents to the library for story hours and crafts programs. Once children reach middle school, however, they are deciding for themselves how to allocate their ever-more-limited leisure time. Home computers, after school activities, and the social scene compete with the “old hat” option of stopping by the library to choose a book for pleasure reading or to attend an enrichment program. The library experience often narrows to the “burden” of visiting only to confront the “weight” of homework assignments. This negative perception can prevail for years.

The County Library is not second guessing what today’s teens would like from their library. Instead, teen councils, open to all interested young adults in grades 6-12, are being established at a number of branch libraries. The teens meet with youth services librarians to advise the library about the kinds of books, magazines, CDs and events they would find interesting and to suggest how the library can serve them better. Teens are learning about the wonderful full-text databases to which the library subscribes and are available via the library’s website for both school needs and personal interests.



Purchasing and Contracting

The County Central Stores Section is well on its way to being a thing of the past. With the discontinuation of this service there will be a need for all to make some adjustments. The Department is working to make it as smooth as possible.



Corporate Express is prepared to take over all the flat paper to include bathroom tissue. Sysco Foods has been named the prime vendor for food and food prep commodities. The department has plans in the works for the other commodities as well and will be creating a comprehensive cross-reference guide for all current customers. The goal is to have 100% of the items out by the end of March 2003. Some departments will be given options on how they can handle commodities that have been inventoried and stored by this section over the years. The Purchasing and Contracting Department is working hard at keeping the County's work practices competitive and in line with the most modern private sector business practices.

Registrar of Voters

The Registrar of Voters is saying goodbye to "Chad." On November 21, the County announced its intention to award a contract for a new direct record electronic voting system (aka touch screen) to Diebold Election Systems, Inc. Beginning with the 2004 Presidential Election, voters in San



Diego County will cast their ballots at the polls on new state-of-the-art equipment by simply touching a screen to make their voting choices.

The County began studying available voting solutions in early 2001 after the Secretary of State decertified the punch card voting systems used by voters in San Diego County. A federal judge ruled that punch card systems in California had to be replaced by 2004. As a result, the County completed an exhaustive selection process that involved a review of ten proposals and demonstrations by five finalists. Diebold's system represents the best choice for San Diego County's 1.4 million registered voters and the best value to the County. Diebold is one of the largest manufacturers of Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) in the world and acquired Global Election Systems in 2000, becoming a leading supplier of electronic voting systems. Alameda County recently contracted with Diebold and successfully implemented a touch screen system at the November election.

In March 2004, voters will see approximately 10,000 touch screen machines in the County's 1,600 polling places on election day and a new optical scan paper ballot system will be in place for voters who vote by mail. The price of the new system is estimated at \$25-30 million of which approximately \$17 million will be reimbursed by the State of California using funds from Proposition 41. The County is also likely to receive additional funding to offset costs from the federal "Help America Vote Act."

Customer Service Pros

Congratulations to the following CSG employees who received special monetary awards and time off for providing exceptional customer service:

ANIMAL CONTROL: Total Dollars Distributed: \$2,535; Total Days Off: 4. Recipients: **Sabrina Amoroso, Efren Audelo, Nicole Baggett, Julie Beilke, Jeannie Brousseau, Lori Brown, Jocelyn Cayabab, Debra Champion, Jennifer Chavez, Scott Chilson, Eugene Cikanek, Kathy Conwell, Dan DeSousa, Gundula Dunne, David Flores, Robin Fraser, Mary Kay Gagliardo, Janet Gaines, Roxana Galeano, Ginger Garrett, Jennifer Gonzalez, Estela Gracia, Raymond Gray, Jennifer Green, Stacie Griffin, Tina Halgat, Darrell Hanson, Mary Hoefert, Harold Holmes, Andrea House, Corinne Howard, Kalani Hudson, Mark Humphrey, Dave Johnson, Maria Kareh, Randy Kerley, Michelle Knuttila, Mark Koge, Noelle Leamons, Mitchell Levy, Kristina Long, Karen McCracken, Jacqui McDade-Shelly, Elizabeth Mendoza, Virginia Moreno, Jason Ogdon, Joni Palumbo, Lewis Petersen, Charlene Ranger, Georgina Raygosa, Juanice Reyna, Kathy Reyna, Sheri Richards-Ochoa, Tony Rogers, Juligie Santos, Janie Sargent, Carolyn Scribner, Melissa Sesma, Kelly Shannon, Justine Taylor, Sandra Veik, Laura Ward, Lori Weber, Ken Winter, Mike Wix, Lisa Worrick and Stephen Ymzon.**

GENERAL SERVICES: Total Dollars Distributed: \$13,858. Recipients: **Nadine Armenta, Chris Babick, Alida Bahena, Willie Batac, Ken Bennett, Scott Bennett, William Blank, Mark Canon, Kevin Dalton, Marshal Dean, Patti Eblen, Art Esteban, Mike Flanagan, Angela Galba, Jayme Gravett-Miller, Tom Hargraves, Carl Harry,**

Don Hicks, Tom Hodge, Todd Hubbard, Scott Johnson, Bill Kite, Amanda Klaahsen, Robin Koop, John Leasau, Anna Marquez, Steve Martinez, Jovita Menes, Roy Meno, Pilar Mirafior, Darren Neal, Rick Nichols, John Orr, Joseph Paris, Joefflor Pasol, Nelson Perez, Joseph Pierre, Bob Simmons, Connie Sulentic, Paul Tanguilig, Ed Thompson, Dennis Verrilli, David Vigil, Tom Vines, Wendie Voight, Tracy Watkins, Henry Whatley and EvaLuz Zarnes.

HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: Total Dollars Distributed: \$2,625; Gift Certificates \$100. Recipients: **Keri Arviso, James Bliss, Ronda Bray, Debbie Dyar, BJ Glouden, Janette Grutzmacher, Jafar Izadi, Ramona Kleit, Hugo Mora, Ghulam Najeed, Angela Ramirez, Monique Rice, Laura Scaperotta, Wanda Spott, Conrad Tanjuaquio, Nancy Varshay, Ranel Velasquez and Vernon Wainscott.**

LIBRARY: Total Dollars Distributed: \$2,000. Recipients: **Libby Nobis and Ruby Narvaez.**

PURCHASING & CONTRACTING: Total Dollars Distributed: \$6,700; Total Days Off 1; Gift Certificates \$500. Recipients: **Ed Alvarez, Raul Arzola, Barbara Cammall, Martha Copley, Gary Freeman, Steve Glenn, Sheila Hamilton, Kallen Henderson, Ron Higley, Roberta Lamp, Marilyn Mendoza, Carla Ozgunduz, and Dee Price.**

HCD Employee Honored

Vicki Madrid, Principal Housing Rehabilitation Specialist in the County's Department of Housing and Community Development, was recently honored at the Chula Vista Boards and Comissions Banquet. She was recognized and commended for her exemplary efforts in serving an eight-year, two-term appointment as the Chairman of the City of Chula Vista's Housing Advisory Commission. Vicki was further recognized for her most recent appointment to serve as a Planning Commissioner on the City of Chula Vista's Planning Commission.



Vicki Madrid

Service Awards

CSG congratulates the following dedicated employees who have provided from 5 to 30 years of service to the County.

NAME	YEARS	DEPT
Lewis Farias	30	DGS
Kenneth Johnson	30	DGS
Carla Jane Mann	30	DGS
Mike Dick	25	DGS
Patricia Eblen	25	DGS
John Orr	25	DGS
Pamela Cortelyou	20	DGS
Mary Machado	20	LIB
Vicki Sue Owens	20	DAC
David Smith	20	DGS
Felipe Arce	15	DGS
Marc Bradley	15	ROV
Michael Chertkow	15	DGS
Bob Grable	15	DGS
Laura Hamlett	15	HCD
Monique Rice	15	HCD
Victor Rosado	15	DGS
Wesley Semonchuck	15	DGS
Fernando Delacruz	10	DGS
Gordon Martinez	10	DGS
Ron Phife	10	DGS
Earnest Richardson	10	DGS
Jeff Stambaugh	10	DGS
Judy Bankson	5	DGS
Jean Brousseau	5	DAC
Virgilio Daplas	5	DGS
Augustin Espinoza	5	DGS
Mark Ferbrache	5	DGS
Carl Harry	5	DGS
Rebecca Kueck	5	LIB
Marcario Ladrado	5	DGS
Jerry Moore	5	DGS
Rex Sumabat	5	DGS
Nancy Varshay	5	HCD

KUDOS Corner

Animal Control

*"I would like to...applaud the efforts of **Officer Mark Humphrey**. Officer Humphrey was assigned to my daughter's case in April following a savage dog attack that has left her face permanently scarred. The attack and subsequent events have been both frightening and frustrating. Throughout the entire process, Officer Humphrey has been a godsend... I will always look back on his role with fondness and appreciation."*

David Lewino

General Services

*"**Andre L. Phillips** has proved an invaluable asset to the Council and its mission of safety in San Diego. As a member of the Council's Board of Directors, Andre served not only the Council this year, but our community as well."*

Darby Vorce, Executive Director of the Pacific Safety Council

Housing & Community Development

*"**Jose Dorado** has been very helpful to me. He treated me with respect and was very polite. He didn't make me feel ashamed or like I was a low life because of my situation."*

C. Morales, Vista

Library

"By using the San Diego County Library website, I can reserve and request books, browse the catalog, as well as renew my outstanding books. Like my rental movies, I can never seem to get my books back in time, so this site saves me!"

Pam Evans, Co-Founder & Sr. Vice President of Musics-Match

Purchasing and Contracting

*"Thank you [**Winston McColl**] for speaking to my class last night at San Diego State University on Purchasing. Your presentation was outstanding as usual and extremely well received by the students."*

Gregory J. Smith
County Assessor/Recorder/Clerk

Registrar of Voters

*"We are pleased to have the opportunity to work with an office that has a sense of urgency when it comes to election issues. **McPherson and her staff** deserve high marks in every category and are truly dedicated to the principle of service to everyone."*

David Waitley
Reporter for the Alpine Sun



The Community Services Group newsletter is published quarterly for the employees of the Group.

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The CSG Newsletter is available on the County's Internet site at

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